STAFFORD EXCHANGE COMPETITION.—I cannot restrain my indignation when I see such advertisements in THE BUILDER as the one this week from the provisional committee of the Stafford Exchange, &c., which offers the astounding sum of 20*l.* to the successful architect who is foolish enough to waste his time on such a competition. Here they require post-offices, offices of inland revenue, savings bank, news and reading room, a large room for library, committee-rooms, an institute of five rooms, a lecture hall for 800 people, a superintendent's house and offices, the time to prepare which would, at the lowest estimate, take four weeks of intense application, saying nothing of the preparatory studies the architect has had to go through. Do they imagine that we can live on the honour accruing from obtaining the *prize* of being the chosen tool of such honourable generous men as those on the Stafford provisional committee? When are these things to cease? All honour be given to your paper, which has ever exposed such proceedings. Accept my thanks for your advocacy of the architect's rights and necessities.—P.

A LEARNED EX-CARPENTER.—An interesting sketch is given in the *Albany Dutchman*, a paper published in Albany, State of New York, of a Mr. John Paterson, a native of New Jersey, originally a carpenter, but afterwards, successively, a clerk, bookseller, druggist, &c., and finally a printer. Mr. Paterson, though thus kicked about the new world like an old foot-ball, or like "the rolling stone" which "gathers no moss," unlike the latter type of a worthless life, appears to have managed, more like the snow-ball which rolls into an avalanche, to gather an immense amount of learning, the usual fruit of sedentary and studious habit, and even at the same time, like a true American, to collect some little cash, wherewith to salt his attic lore. "Mr. Paterson," says our authority, "is a scholar in every sense of the term. He is not only thoroughly versed in every branch of mathematics, but can read and write Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic, with as much ease and fluency as he can English. In the different living languages he is equally well posted up, and is probably the only man on earth who can converse in every language spoken in Europe. His great work, 'The Calculus of Operations,' has just issued from the press, and is, in the opinion of scientific men, one of the most profound productions that the mathematical world has yet given to society. With no aid but industry, and no higher salary than that which is bestowed on a journeyman printer, Mr. Paterson has become not only thoroughly acquainted with every department of human knowledge, but has acquired a handsome little property, and owns one of the best select libraries in the city. The latter contains some 3,000 volumes, while its estimated worth is 6,000 dollars. In our opinion" finally 'calculates' the *Albany Dutchman*, with all the phlegmatic coolness of his tribe, "nature will produce a half-dozen Shakspeares before she produces another man whose acquirements will compare with those belonging to this modest, unpretending printer."

LIABILITY TO WORKMEN FOR INJURIES SUSTAINED.—In the Sheriffs' Small Debt Court at Glasgow, an action was lately brought at the instance of a labourer against his employers, Mr. William Broom, builder, and Messrs. Thomas Lamb and Sons, wrights and joiners, "for damage sustained by him in consequence of the carelessness or neglect of one or other of the defendants, or their servants, in the erection of a building in or near Port-Dundas, whereby the sum of 3*l.* 15*s.* was incurred, viz. for doctor's attendance, 15*s.*, and 3*l.* for wages, being at the rate of 12*s.* per week." The defenders pleaded ignorance of the cause of the accident, on which the pursuer led evidence, showing how the accident occurred, viz. from the falling of a piece of wood or other part of a scaffolding, which had not been properly secured. The sheriff found the foreman of Mr. Broom liable for the amount sued for, on the ground that it was his duty, or that of his employers, for the protection and safety of the lives of the workmen under them, to see that the buildings or other fixtures were in a proper and safe condition previous to their operatives proceeding to work upon the same.

ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY OF ARCHDEACONRY OF NORTHAMPTON.—At the last meeting of the committee, L. Christie, esq., and subsequently the Marquess of Northampton in the chair, it was stated that plans for the restoration of Wellingborough, Wilby, Ashwell, and South Luffenham churches were in preparation, and would be submitted for the inspection of the committee. From letters of the Rev. J. P. Lowe, secretary of the Lincolnshire Architectural Society, it appeared the forthcoming joint volume of Reports and Papers would be issued early in this year. The societies of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Bedfordshire, and St. Albans, have now joined the society of this archdeaconry, for the purposes of the associated volume, — which, besides the reports, will contain the chief papers of interest read at the meetings of the several societies during the last two years, accompanied with a large number of illustrations. This volume will be sent gratis to every member. Its circulation will amount to 1,250. The Marquess of Northampton called the attention of the committee to the proposed Exhibition of Mediæval Art, in London, during the ensuing year. A St. Peter's Committee was then formed, when a financial statement was made, showing that their funds already exceeded the sum required for the extension of the chancel, though the committee have still to depend on the liberality of the public to enable them to carry out their original design of a complete re-arrangement of the interior fittings.

A SUGGESTION FOR THE SOCIETY OF ARTISTS.—We wish we could persuade the members of this society to open the doors to the working classes for a fortnight, before the final close of each season; and to begin at once. We are firmly impressed with the conviction that by so doing they would give an incalculable amount of pleasure to many an individual whose sensibilities are as acute as those of his richer fellows, who has a love of the beautiful none the less pure because it is not educated, and to whom the sight of such a collection of pictures as that in the Society of Artists would be the realisation of a day dream, a fund of enjoyment that might make plain many of the rough places of life. If precedent be wanted for such a step, we point to Manchester, where throughout a considerable portion of the season the working classes are admitted on Saturdays, at a charge of twopence. In Liverpool, the rooms are open during the evenings of the last fortnight, at the same price. We have made inquiries as to the result of the arrangement, and we find that none of the pictures have suffered, the funds have been benefited, and much elevating pleasure communicated to thousands who else would have been excluded from this feast, prepared for the rich man's palate alone. It may be contended that sixpence is a small sum to give for such a gratification, and so it is. But we want the working man to be accompanied by his wife and family. In such circumstances, the small individual charge becomes prohibitory in the aggregate.—*Birmingham Journal.*

PORTRAITS OF DISTINGUISHED CHEMISTS.—Mr. Mayall, the American Daguerreotypist, has recently issued a print representing Messrs. Brande, Miller, Faraday, Grove, and Graham, executed on stone, from daguerreotypes made by him. The likenesses are undeniable and will interest a large number of persons, though the lithographer, M. Shappers, has given a certain ghastly appearance to Faraday which will not please those who know the sparkle of his eye, and playful vivacity. The likeness of Brande is particularly excellent. We have since seen some daguerreotypes of other eminent men by Mr. Mayall, which are certainly amongst the finest productions of the process that have yet come under our notice.

STREET ARCHITECTURE IN PLYMOUTH.—In one of the principal streets of Plymouth, last week, a number of workmen, under the protection of a party of police, by direction of the clerk to the Commissioners of Improvement, pulled down a newly-erected shop front, in consequence of the proprietor having persisted in building it 18 inches farther out over the street than was agreeable to the law. The proprietor, who had been cautioned again and again, although sorely annoyed, was obliged to submit.

SPURIOUS RELICS IN HOLYROOD PALACE.—At a late meeting of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, Mr. Daniel Wilson, the secretary, read a paper, entitled, "Notices of certain Popular Relics of Queen Mary in Holyrood Palace," in which he deprecated the pitiful show of pretended relics, especially of Queen Mary's reign, exhibited by the housekeeper and her assistants. "The presence chamber, with its adjacent closets, are the grand arena of the show. Here we are shown the first fire grate ever known in Scotland, brought hither, of course, by Queen Mary, and marvellously like various others in adjoining apartments. Here too is the double chair or throne expressly made for the marriage of Queen Mary and Darnley; though by a singular and no doubt economical foresight the royal upholsterers have wrought on the Queen's throne the cypher of her grandson Charles, and of his Queen Henrietta Maria! Round this remarkable centre-piece a pleasant variety of rickety old furniture is grouped, such as one may occasionally see at a broker's door in the Cowgate. Some of these also have the anticipatory cypher; while the uninitiated would be apt to ascribe others to the reign of the Georges. They are all genuine and authenticated Queen Mary relics. Prints in little slips of black, some with broken glasses, more with no glasses at all, but begrimmed and worm-eaten, and even in tatters, help to carry out the idea of a Cowgate broker's shop," &c. &c. Something ought to be done to redeem actual relics, of so abiding an interest, from that contempt into which they are sinking, while confounded with glaring and obvious impostures.

APPROPRIATION AND MISAPPROPRIATION OF RAILWAY ARCHES.—It is some time since we first suggested the appropriation of the cavities of terminus and other railway arches as sheltering-places, under police supervision, for the houseless, and we had hoped that ere now none of such vaults or cavities would have been left for misappropriation, such as that disclosed in a recent paragraph in the daily papers on the "extraordinary discovery of a den of thieves" in one of those under the terminus of the London and South-Western Railway, in the York-road, Lambeth. There, it appears, some "Twenty Thieves," as they call themselves, have dug a narrow hole through one of the archway walls, and secretly "appropriated" the interior as a den of vice, to which simple and innocent youths have been inveigled, probably by the very romance of the thing, and where a sort of domestic cooking and lodging establishment has been discovered by the police, through the instrumentality of one of these youths, who had been initiated into the art and mystery of thieving, in this den of the twenty thieves.

RENT GUARANTEE SOCIETY.—A prospectus has been issued, with list of office-bearers, &c., by a society, incorporated under Act 7 & 8 Vict. cap. 110, for the purpose of securing to landlords the punctual payment of their rents by a certain day, in return for a moderate commission for collection and guarantee, thus placing incomes derivable from house property on a footing of certainty. Startling as such an application of the principle of assurance may at first sight seem to be, there cannot be a doubt that, if based on sound calculations, and carried out with commercial discretion and integrity, it at least promises well.

IMPROVEMENT OF BANKING HOUSES.—In connection with the Exhibition, the *Banker's Magazine* states that Mr. J. W. Gilbart offers a prize of 100*l.* for the best essay in reply to the following question:—"In what way can any of the articles collected at the Industrial Exhibition of 1851 be rendered especially serviceable to the interests of practical banking?" "These articles," it is explained, "may be architectural models that may suggest improvements in the bank-house or office—inventions by which light, heat, and ventilation may be secured, so as to promote the health and comfort of the bank clerks—discoveries in the fine arts, by which the interior of a bank may be decorated, or the bank furniture rendered more commodious.—new inventions in the construction of locks, cash boxes, and safes, which shall render property more secure against fire or thieves."

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